

## **Experiential Fire: Keeping the Home Fires Burning**

### **Abstract**

Come join us as we stay warm with a brand new set of exercises for this year's experiential fire. Our current guardians of the flame are excited to share a wide variety of exercises and approaches and welcome your participation to keep those fires burning. A perennial favorite, come experience and learn by doing with this curated collection of engaging experiential exercises. Our five presenters will introduce you to their innovative exercises in a "speed networking" format. This year's session includes exercises focusing on engagement, feedback, communication and social identity. Full details of the exercises will be available in the Conference Proceedings.

**Three Keywords:** experiential exercises, active learning, innovation

**Session format:** Symposium

**Time requested:** 60 minutes.

**Resource needs:** Video conferencing software and an internet connection!

**Conference Track.** General, however, if possible it would be helpful to place this session immediately before the Management Teaching Review session.

**Unique Contribution.** This is a unique symposium that has not been presented before and is not under review. The Experiential Fire format has been a presence at MOBTC for over a decade.

### **Introduction.**

This dynamic and experientially focused session is designed to engage the audience as active participants in short exercises run by each of the presenters. These exercises explore the ways in which a broad range of management concepts and topics can be taught and experienced in a variety of innovative ways at both undergraduate and graduate level. Audience members have the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters and to connect after the session concludes to discuss the details, logistics and purpose of the exercises at length. This session is of value to educators of all disciplines and levels and should be equally attractive to those who are looking to adapt and add new tools to their kit or who simply wish to explore and be exposed to new approaches and ideas.

### **Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications.**

This session is heavily grounded in experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). In the last decade a variety of opportunities for experiential exercises in traditional and non-traditional teaching environments have been proposed (Batchelor & Burch, 2016; Boggs,

Mickel & Holtom, 2007; Crowne, 2017; Gibson, Ward, Comer & Rossi, 2017) along with broader calls for an experiential approach to classroom activity (Kalliath & Laiken, 2006; Kenworthy & DiPadova-Stocks, 2010; Whetten, 2007). In addition, the ethical aspects of using experience as an approach to teaching learning have also been discussed (Dean & Forray, 2016). The intention of this session is not to debate the rights or wrongs of the experiential approach (though of course those ideas may well be raised during the session) but to bring to the audience a variety of possibilities which could be adopted or adapted for further use, experimentation and development. The remainder of this submission presents an overview of the actual session and each of the experiential exercises that we would like to present. Additionally, any related theoretical foundations for each of the exercises presented during this session will be described in the conference proceedings.

### **Symposium Overview.**

This symposium will follow the historic Experiential Fire format. In this structure, we will begin with a very brief history of the session, a description of the session, and then a short welcome from a representative from the Management Teaching Review. Swiftly, we will begin the panel of short 5 minute presentations (think power networking or speed dating) where the facilitators demonstrate and describe key dimensions of their experiential exercises to and with willing audience members. Detailed instructions will be provided in the proceedings which include, but are not limited to instructions, role descriptions, and relevant digital resources (video clips, images, PPTs, hyperlinks). After the presentations the audience will have the opportunity to ask questions and network with presenters and other members.

An abbreviated summary of the five experiential exercises follows:

### **Exercise 1: Setting the hook: Creating emotional engagement in the first minute of class**

#### **Facilitator: A**

At the beginning of class, students may be unfocused and or thinking about something external to class. In this short Experiential Fire session, I will show how it only takes one or two minutes to help students transition their attention from external demands to a course-related topic – all by using simple questions related to the topic of the day. First, I provide one working example from a class session about emotions involving the entire audience. This is based on an activity I have used in both Organizational Behavior and Negotiations courses. Then I will debrief the activity and provide additional examples of questions I use when teaching other course topics, including a handout for participants to take with them and utilize in their courses.

### **Exercise 2: The Search for Effective Feedback**

#### **Facilitator B**

This activity is modified from a previous version to focus primarily on delivering feedback in the workplace. This 15-25 minute activity is designed to introduce the topic of feedback and to reinforce the importance of giving effective feedback within the workplace. Four volunteers leave the classroom. The class hides an object in the classroom. The instructor calls each volunteer back one at a time and is given different types of feedback (e.g., no feedback, negative non-specific feedback, positive non-specific feedback, or specific feedback) while searching for the object. After completing the activity, the instructor facilitates a discussion regarding how the different types of feedback contributed to or inhibited each of the volunteer's performance. We

typically connect this activity to further discussion regarding best practices for giving and receiving general feedback in the workplace and more specifically related to performance management.

### **Exercise 3: Impressing Our Better Selves: Putty in Our Own Hands**

#### **Facilitator C**

The purpose of this exercise is to animate this realization by learners. You are practitioners of the lifelong craft of making your Self better. You do this by impressing information, gleaned in vivid action, into the shaping of your solely-owned, constantly developing body of knowledge. This effect is symbolized by handling of an “egg” of Silly Putty. Open its shell to information-rich experience. Sculpt the putty (body of knowledge) with raw information pressed re-shaping what you know differently now. After the experiential learning activity is practiced, consider the ensuing shape of the putty as self-revealing reflection of how well you practice learning itself.

### **Exercise 4: Yikes! I look ugly today**

#### **Facilitator E**

This short role-play exercise explores issues associated with cross-cultural communication. Scholars maintain that cultural values shape all our perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors (Hofstede, 1980). This creates interesting situations when two individuals from different cultural backgrounds are communicating. Even when the medium of communication is a common language such as English, both parties word their messages and interpret those of the other party in light of their own cultural values. This can easily lead to miscommunication and conflict in the

workplace. In today's diverse workplace cultural intelligence is not a desired but a critical skill. Through this exercise instructors can enhance their students' cultural intelligence, and cross-cultural communication skills.

### **Exercise 5: Creating More Cohesiveness in the Classroom: Student-Led Problem Solving**

#### **Discussions**

#### **Facilitator H**

Building upon the use of social identity theory in the classroom as a method to increase classroom cohesiveness and inclusivity, this session demonstrates an additional activity which can be implemented to continue to foster inclusivity while also creating a deeper level of information-sharing. In this exercise, at various points of the semester students share their goals, strategies that they have put into place, and successes and failures with their (required) personal change/wellness project and ask for feedback from their classmates with a debriefing session (instructor-led) addressing the viability of the feedback/suggestions. This session will describe how instructors can use this technique in their classroom with alternative topics, including such things as students describing their experiences/progress/problems with a particular assignment, a difficult course, or even a more personal topic such as their procrastination or level of stress.

#### **Session Description**

As discussed above, we will follow a streamlined and highly structured format of an introduction, mini-presentations, to leave time for a question and answer session. This is a highly engaging session where the audience is asked to participate in the various experiential exercises which allows for active learning of our members and a "try it before you buy it" opportunity. If

possible, we would like the session to precede the Management Teaching Review “Meet the Editors Session” to provide further synergy between our conference presentations and scholarship opportunities. See the timeline below for specifics.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presenter/s</b>	<b>Time (Elapsed Time)</b>
1. Crowd Management-Settling in	Co-organizers	5 (5)
2. Introduction	Co-organizers	10 (15)
3. Mini-presentations	Presenters (5 @ 5 min. each)	25 (40)
4. Question & Answer	Everyone	20 (60)

## **References**

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